My dear Mercia Rome Mon Jan 8th 1866

How you will all sympathize with me in my great loss, for Mary was my favorite & gifted daughter, & almost from her infancy had been my artistic companion & ever since had been my great pride. — I can scarce believe, much less understand that the dear creature has been snatched away so suddenly & strangely for a sweet & gentle destiny seemed always to follow her I hope this may find you recovered & beg to thank you for your charming letter, — Our excellent brother Tom will get you the £7 — some mistake with Walter prevented your having it before

Pardon my writing more for I have only this moment got the terrible letter with the tragedy of my dear dear Mary

ever your loving Joe

is still with us & likely to remain so for she
recovers her health & with us is all believe
at a discreet expenditure - There is a great
advantage for Eleanor as Miss Winter is a
well educated woman & not young (near 40)
& as I am so much engaged in my two constables
& we get on very well - Of course now all
gaiety & parties are at an end - Nor I am
obliged to lend my big ugly house to the meetings
of an Archaeological Society & on the 8th
there will be some 200 people, with my
5 rooms all lit up with 5 Chandeliers, for
you see the Papal party do not like meetings
but as I am trusted in every thing, so this is
allowed in my house - Of course it is no expense
to me - We have the most lovely winter &
spring I have ever known, & I am writing
this with my windows open & roses blowing
whereas I dare say you have nothing but your
bellows blowing, (very cold) very planting flourishes & I
am doing 5 pictures, but I don't succeed in selling
any thing - Your loving brother Joe